

Summary of the Friday Sermon Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad - Khalifatul Masih IV. On 14th February 1997

Say 'O My servants who have committed excesses against your own selves! Despair not of the mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Assuredly He is Most Forgiving and Merciful.'

'And turn ye to your Lord and submit yourselves before Him prior to there coming to you the punishment when you can no longer be helped.'

'And follow the highest of what has been revealed to you from your Lord before the punishment takes you unawares while you perceive not.'

'Lest a soul should say 'O, my grief! I fell short in my conduct despite being in the presence of Allah and surely I was of those who scoffed.'

'Or lest it should say 'If Allah had guided me I should certainly have been among the righteous.'

'Or lest it should say when it sees the punishment 'If only I had one more chance I would be among those who do good!'

The Holy Quran. al-Zumar [The Throngs]: 54 - 59.

Before addressing the subjects mentioned in these verses I wish to draw attention to 2 things: During the 2 *Nikahs* [engagements] led on Eidul Fitr I had said that I do not remember whether Hazrat Nawab Abdullah Khan (Allah be pleased with him) was a Companion [of the Promised Messiah] or not. In clarification of this I refer to the Report received from Maulana Dost Muhammad the Historian of Ahmadiyya which categorically proves that Hazrat Nawab Abdullah Khan was a Companion of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Similarly whilst remembering Chaudhry Ahmad Mukhtar (former Amir of Karachi) in a previous sermon I had said that respected Chaudhry Ahmad Mukhtar was appointed Amir of Karachi after Chaudhry Muhammad Abdullah Khan. This is historically incorrect and in fact respected Sheikh Rehmatullah has also served as Amir during the interim period before respected Chaudhry Ahmad Mukhtar.

The Community had opportunity to repent and ask forgiveness and shed their sins during Ramadan. Those who have emerged from of Ramadan washed, cleansed and purified are most fortunate.

We must strive for those who have not been fully cleansed so that they may be written among the pious upon their deaths. In this respect this verse brings a good tiding but also carries a warning in that '*O those who have committed excesses against themselves and have committed very large sins! Never despair of the mercy of Allah. Surely Allah has power to forgive all sins. Indeed He is the one who is Most Forgiving and oft-returning in Mercy*'.

The impression the meaning of this verse creates of a general announcement and that every sinner is forgiven is incorrect because here a possibility of being forgiven is left open but it does not announce that every individual would be forgiven. Therefore the following verse states '*Submit to your Lord, turn to Him and give yourselves over to Him*'. Similarly it also states not to be satisfied at the lesser of the directives you have been delivered but to grasp the greater of them in righteousness. People who repent but do not hasten to adopt the best virtues and continue to defer the noblest acts due to their personal weakness are always in a

perilous state. To adopt the better virtues is not an optional thing and is actually part of the requirements of one's daily life. There is exceptional reward in this very world for those who carry out the noblest of virtues. In this regard if you attend to the removal of your ills and wish to remain attentive to it then try to rectify yourselves in this manner that inclination to Allah should come first and foremost. Inclination to Allah is in itself vital for forgiveness.

If you wish to come under the shade of this general announcement of forgiveness then turn to your Lord and when you turn to Allah admiringly then Almighty God would enact a transformation within you. Once you incline towards Allah then you would be able to take the next step. 'Submit yourselves before Him' and give yourselves over to Him. So try to create an admiration for Allah in your hearts. [So that] when you remember God give yourselves over to Him with that reference point and try to purify yourselves of your sins. As a result of a loving inclination towards Allah restless prayers spring out from one's heart.

His Holiness the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) has spoken on the subject hidden in the words of *Say 'O my Servants'*:

Say 'O My servants who have committed excesses against your own selves! Despair not of the mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Assuredly He is Most Forgiving and Merciful.'

In this verse instead of: *O servants of Allah*; the Holy Prophet ﷺ was commanded to say: *O my servants*. This verse was revealed in this form so that God Almighty might convey the good news of limitless mercies and might comfort the broken-hearted in consequence of their sins. Thus, Allah the Glorious desired to exhibit a sample of His mercies and to make it manifest to what extent He honours His faithful servant with special favours. By adopting the form: *Say 'O my servants'*; God in effect said: Look at My beloved Messenger and see at what high rank he has arrived [sic] through his perfect obedience to Me that now all that is Mine is his. He who desires salvation should become his servant. That is to say, he should obey him so perfectly as if he was his slave. Then whatever sins he might have committed will be forgiven him. The word '*abd*' in Arabic idiom also means slave as it is said: 'A believing slave is better than an idolater.'¹ In the verse to which we have drawn attention, it is indicated that whoever desires salvation should establish the relationship of a slave with this Prophet. That is to say, should not step outside his commandment and should consider themselves bound to his obedience as a slave is bound and they would then obtain salvation. One pities those benighted souls who bear such rancour towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they deem names like Ghulam Nabi, Ghulam Rasul, Ghulam Mustafa, Ghulam Ahmad and Ghulam Muhammad, to amount to associating the Holy Prophet ﷺ with God, whereas the verse indicates that these names are a means of salvation. As '*abd*' implies that a person so named should refrain from every kind of freedom and self-direction and should be completely obedient to the master, therefore, the seekers after truth have been urged that if they wish to attain salvation they should adapt themselves to this condition. This verse has the same connotation as the verse:

Say 'If you love Allah follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you your faults. And Allah is Most forgiving, Merciful.'²

¹ *The Holy Quran*. al-Baqarah [The Heifer]: 122.

² *The Holy Quran*. Āl Imran [Family of Imran]: 32.

Perfect following demands that devotion and full obedience which is conveyed in the expression 'abd. The verse: Say 'O my servants'; means in effect: Say 'O my followers', who are involved in sins, ...³

To begin the subject of forgiveness with the words Say 'O My servants' draws attention to not being satisfied at mere forgiveness but to proceed towards me as Muhammad the Messenger of Allah ﷺ proceeded so that you become His people. So any person who wants salvation should become a servant of Muhammad the Messenger of Allah.

Forgiveness is also conditional to perfect obedience towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ and this perfect obedience can only be achieved slowly and gradually but the interest in it begins with أُسْلِمُوا ['submit yourselves']. Whoever gives oneself over to the *Sunnah* [practice] of Muhammad the Messenger of Allah would be fulfilling the duties of أُسْلِمُوا.

The case of inclination should begin right from childhood. Teach your children the subject of inclination right from their childhoods and rather than call the wayward towards yourself harshly bring their hearts to attend to you through inclination. May Allah the Almighty enable us to make the blessings of Ramadan last forever for us in this way.

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³ Ahmad, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam. *Aina Kamalat e Islam*. (Riyaz e Hind, 1893). 190-193.